

Stonewall Democrats of South Central Indiana  
Candidate Questionnaire  
March 15, 2023

Isabel Piedmont-Smith  
Bloomington City Council, District 1

**1. Why are you seeking this office?**

I am an incumbent and still have a lot of plans to fulfill to make Bloomington a more sustainable, inclusive community. My main goals are (1) to implement the 2021 Climate Action Plan, (2) to bring more residents into local government decision-making, and (3) to strengthen the local social safety net.

**2. What other civic engagement have you been involved with (boards, commissions, volunteer positions, rotary, exchange, etc.)?**

Bloomington Environmental Commission, IU Bloomington Professional Staff Council, IUB Anti-Sweatshop Advisory Committee, Jobs With Justice, Democratic Women's Caucus, South Central Community Action Program Board, Citizens Advisory Committee of the Metropolitan Planning Organization, Monroe County Solid Waste Management Board (as a City Council member)

**3. In the past (including ongoing efforts), what ways have you worked to improve the lives of LGBTQIA+ people (e.g., through issue advocacy, community involvement, volunteer efforts, supporting LGBTQIA+ candidates, etc.)? [Your answer may be made public]**

I was active in the fight against HJR 6 in 2013, participating in a phone bank and attending a protest at Karst Farm Park west of Bloomington organized by Freedom Indiana. I also attended a rally at the statehouse during this time.

More recently, this spring I have sent a letter to both Indiana House Majority Leader Huston and Senate Majority Leader Garten to urge them to NOT pass 5 bills in the reconciliation process of the General Assembly that are discriminatory against LGBTQIA+ Hoosiers. I would have included our own State Senator and State Representative, but I think they are already on board AGAINST these hateful bills.

**4. If elected to this office, how do you envision improving the lives of LGBTQIA+ people in your community? [Your answer may be made public]**

I will try to bring more community members into the government decision-making process, not just with the monthly constituent meetings that I have held since 2008, but also by attending community meetings and events to learn what historically underserved communities want from their government. Bloomington does have a perfect score on the Human Rights Campaign

index, but we must be vigilant to uphold the rights of LGBTQIA+ residents and visitors in the face of ongoing statewide discrimination.

Overall, one of the main goals of my service is to strengthen the social safety net, and that net is for everyone. Therefore, my work toward reducing homelessness, increasing the availability of housing, funding for substance misuse treatment and mental health all would benefit the community that the Stonewall Democrats represent as well as others.

**5. Currently, the Indiana Statehouse is considering (and passing) several bills that aim to deny transgender children gender-affirming care, allow conversion therapy to continue, force teachers to out children to their parents, prevent gender changes on ID cards, and more. How would you address any legislative action that opposes LGBTQIA+ inclusion and equality? [Your answer may be made public]**

We must speak out strongly against these hateful and harmful bills. It's a matter of life or death for people with gender dysphoria to not receive gender-affirming care. The suicide rates of trans youth and LGBTQIA+ youth in general are atrocious. We must affirm the equality of all Hoosiers, regardless of gender identification, and work toward equity in this area. I was not on the City Council when it passed Resolution 13-15 supporting marriage equality, but I certainly would have co-sponsored that resolution. If local LGBTQIA+ community activists think that a similar resolution affirming trans rights would be beneficial, I would love to work on such a resolution with you.

**6. How would you address local community opposition to LGBTQIA+ inclusion and equality? [Your answer may be made public]**

The City of Bloomington has a strong human rights ordinance that states we will not discriminate on the basis of characteristics including sexual orientation or gender identity. Any Bloomington resident who feels they have been the victim of discrimination in housing, employment, or other opportunities can come to the Human Rights Commission to ask for an investigation and resolution to the problem. This process needs to be more widely publicized, and the entities found to act in a discriminatory manner need to be called out publicly. Furthermore, I think education as well as cultural events can go a long way to help residents who may not know any LGBTQIA+ people to overcome any fear that they may have due to their religion or upbringing. I fully support Bloomington Pride, the Pride Film Festival, and other joyous and thoughtful public activities that celebrate the contributions and lives of LGBTQIA+ people. And I love a good drag show.